Title: *Modern Review* and its shaping of English Literary Culture in India

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This study aims to delineate the role of the English magazine/journal *Modern Review* (1907-1974; founder-editor, Ramananda Chatterjee) in the rise of English print periodical magazines in India, in reshaping the aspiration of the emergent literary and print public sphere for an anticolonial native resistance, in the context of the influence of literary and print periodical culture of colonial Bengal on questions of cosmopolitanism, nationalism, identity, culture, aesthetics, politics. Adequate work has not been done in the area of the role of English journals in Indian nationalism. The lacuna is particularly evident in the context of such an important journal as *Modern Review*. Started in 1907, by and under the editorship of Ramananda Chatterjee, *Modern Review* contributed inevitably to the unique project of Indian nationalism which extended to the postcolonial issues of race, caste, class, gender, religion. Perhaps, the only competitor of the journal at that time was *Indian Social Reformer*, published from the South.

As will be underscored time and again in this study, *Modern Review* is exemplary in terms of both the period and socio-political context of its existence. One of the more striking features of *Modern Review* would be that it occupied a space of overlap between the academic-literary mould and the outrightly journalistic, as far as English public sphere in India is concerned. It is indeed true of most print periodicals world over that their growth is concomitant with the rise of novels published in serial form and the rise of the essay form. The rise of literary criticism as an independent genre may have some relation with the rise of the periodical form in which criticism and debate about works of art and literature became an important marker of a community of readers-writers-publishers standing for a nascent conception of nation (Mitra 63). Again, a lot of work were translated, and many contributors were bilingual. At a time when the concurrent party journals of Indian National Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Communists, the Muslim League, the Scheduled Caste Federation occupied the political imagination of the people, *Modern Review* was the only journal/magazine apart from *Indian Social Reformer* which had a pan India mandate.

This study will focus on the period of publication of *Modern Review* under the editorship of Ramananda Chatterjee until his untimely demise in 1943. The publication of *Modern Review* occurs at an opportune moment of Indian freedom struggle and reformist movements of the 20th century, in between the two World War when renaissance consciousness and surveillance awareness were vibrant in the Indian society and polity.

Ramananda Chatterjee, was on personal terms with many of the contemporary personalities including Rabindranath, Romain Rolland, the young Ramkinkar Baij. In *Modern Review* we find a defense of Raja Ram Mohan Roy who was attacked by his contemporaries as a de-nationalizing influence for his progressive thoughts and clear embrace of western enlightenment. In the opening issue we find a scholarly article on 'Indian Readers and European Literature' by Prof Knox Johnson of Allahabad. Soon after, we find monthly series by Sister Nivedita on the value of arts in education as well as factual study of causes and cure of recurring famines in Bengal. Negro burning in Georgia, a married girl child's suicide, the situation of Indians in Fiji and East Africa find timely and scholarly analysis in his columns.

Fashioning of modern vernacular languages, it is mostly argued, was the need of the hour felt by the elite sections of the society to depart from ancient national traditions and culture to embrace modernity without succumbing to the dominant culture of the ruling English. There was a felt need for the Hindu nationalist *bhadralok* to give up the culture and language of the lowly, the *chhotolok,* the uneducated, the women, and the Muslim mlechchas. By the beginning decades of the twentieth century, a literary culture catering to the Hindu bhadralok had been put in place. The reading public was to be cultivated as a nascent conception of the imagined community of nation. The *Kallol* era of the 1920s struggled deeply with the Modernism-Realism debate and questioned the very foundations of 'realism' on which was based the nineteenth century literary public sphere of Bengal. Even the monolithic unified nation imagined in the vernacular's ideal bourgeois public sphere fails to live up to this scrutiny of dissenting voices within it.

In such a scenario, this study seeks to argue that an English periodical magazine like *Modern Review*, founded and edited by Prabasi's founder- editor Ramananda Chatterjee, was a very important and redefining intervention in the literary public sphere of India. Just as the very term *Prabasi* (literally, diaspora) hints at the consideration of the magazine for Bengalis settled in other parts of India, *Modern Review* too was contributed to and read by people from all over India. This study also focuses on the fundamental problem of reading native resistance within a project like the *Modern Review*, which was a journal in English brought out by a member of the Bengali Hindu elite. It seeks to present an 'against the grain reading' of the print-capitalistic deployments of the elite. Though it will be commonsensical to presume that an English journal brought out by a Bengali *bhadralok* would be complicit with British colonialism, an 'against the grain' reading will, on the contrary, show the fissures within such a presumption by discovering how *Modern Review* was actually aiding a counter-colonial imagining of India. The use of English and the imagining therefore of a pan-Indian (and thus non-national) author-reader base for the journal is in itself a potential critique of the desired dominant notion of the vernacular nation. *Modern Review*'suse of English makes it subversive of the implicated elite nationalism. In such a study the journal itself becomes a site of struggle for these discursive formations. Therefore, this study will examine the intervention of *Modern Review,* as journal and literature, in this dialectic of dissemination of received master-narrative of language of English and concurrent nationalism and representation of local structures that resist these. Postcolonialism offers a point of entry into this discourse of appropriation and resistance based on *Modern Review*'s interest in representing the

problems of identity, community, nation and subjectivity.

This study will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter will survey the existing literature on *Modern Review*; map the terrain of *Modern Review* from 1907-1943, life and thoughts of its founder editor Ramananda Chatterjee and the regular contributors like Rabindranath Tagore, Sister Nivedita, Dinabandhu Andrews, Jadunath Sarkar, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Alfred Knox Johnson, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sita Devi, Abanindranath Tagore, Toru Dutt and other interviewees et al.

Chapter Two will survey different perspectives on the various issues of education and their relation with the national question of race, language and ethnicity, and the fashioning of a nationalist self. It will take up the essays in *Modern Review* on the subject of education under separate subheadings viz. question of nationalist education, the language question, women's education, children's education, question of practical/vocational education, Indian Students and Education in the west. The third chapter will focus on the issue of gender which does not come across in a feminist vein in *Modern Review.* To a great extent it tries to represent Indian woman in modern light, but there is an acute dearth of women writers. The few who are available like Sister Nivedita, works of Toru Dutt, Sita Devi find adequate representation. Militant nationalism and masculinity per se are never championed in *Modern Review*. This chapter will make a survey of the question of gender from the perspective of nationalism, domesticity, health and nutrition, education, language as portrayed in the essays of the journal.

The fourth chapter will look at the close relationship between the questions of philology, linguistics, arts, aesthetics, philosophy, religion, trade, commerce, industry and questions of history, archaeology, ethnology, anthropology, area studies under separate subheadings. This chapter will borrow extensively from concepts of Michel Foucault, especially *Order of Things*to show how networks of power and knowledge worked behind the fashioning of these new disciplines in India, and how resistance was inherent in often very eclectic, often dilettante responses to the master-narrative of the Empire.

A major portion of the fifth chapter will be taken up by the poems of Rabindranath Tagore which were published in *Modern Review*from the very time of its inception in 1907. Novel series by Sita Devi, poems of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, serialization of other novels, poems, plays, short stories in English from abroad, dealing with interesting postcolonial sentiments will be discussed under separate subheadings. The concluding chapter will sum up the research findings of the study of the research question whether *Modern Review* can be counter-read as a English language periodical which was the vanguard of an exo-glossic, pan-Indian, emergent-nationalist, counter-public sphere. The conclusion will also look into the possible shortcomings of this study. It may be mentioned here that *Modern Review* has a corpus which is impossible to incorporate in a single thesis. An important area, which is that of print culture viz advertisement, printing, material, photographs, lithographs, paintings reproduced in *Modern Review* will form several volumes by itself.

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